

**SENTINEL FLU PROVIDERS  
INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE COLLECTION/SUBMISSION OF SPECIMENS  
2012/2013**

DCLS will provide the collection materials and testing services in support of state and federal influenza surveillance monitoring.

**Specimen Collection Kits:** Sentinel kits are prepared by DCLS and may be obtained from the Sample Kit Office at (804) 648-4480 x104.

**Kit Contents:**

- 1 - Sterile Viral Transport Media (VTM) broth. **Store at 2- 30°C. Do not use if turbid or expired.**
- 1 - Dacron swab, aluminum shaft. **Do not use swabs with wooden shafts or cotton.**
- 1 - Small sealable specimen bag (8x10) with absorbent material.
- 1 – Instruction sheet.
- 1 – Green Clinical Microbiology/Virology Request Form (DGS-34-101 Rev 3/08).
- 2 - Cold packs. **Store frozen until used.**
- 1 - Insulated Shipper
- 1 - FEDEX billable stamp for sample shipment to DCLS.

**Instructions for Specimen Collection:** Each kit provides enough material to sample one patient. Collect the sample as close to clinical onset as possible. DCLS must receive the sample within **72 hours of collection** using the provided shipper and cold packs. Refer to the appropriate samples for virus isolation and identification below.

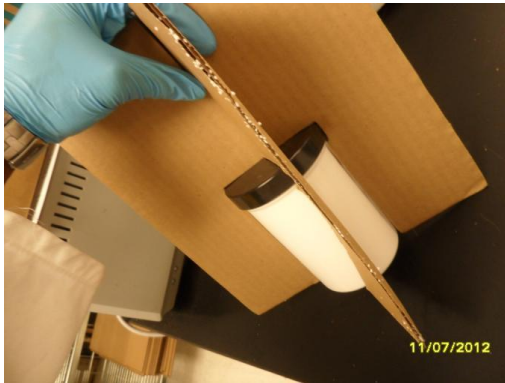
**Collection Procedures for NP Swab Specimens:**

- Instruct the patient to sit with head tilted back slightly. Gently push the tip of the patient's nose back with you thumb.
- Insert the NP swab into the nose and back to the nasopharynx. The patient's eyes will momentarily tear. Slowly rotate the swab as it is being withdrawn.
- Repeat the process using the same swab in the second nostril.
- Insert a single swab into one VTM container, bending the wire if necessary to fit completely inside the vial. Properly thread the cap onto the vial to prevent leakage.
- Label the VTM collection tube with the patient's name and date of collection. Complete the request form and refrigerate the sample until packaging for transport.

**Instructions for Specimen Transport**

Package specimen for transport to the laboratory in compliance with shipping regulations detailed in IATA 1.5 AND 49 CFR Section 1720700 [U.S. Department of Transportation] using the provided shipper.

1. Ensure that specimen is properly labeled and the Green Clinical Microbiology/Virology Request Form is complete.
2. Open the black and white sealed pressurized cylinder vessel, leaving the absorbent material in place.
3. Insert the labeled sample into any crevices created by the absorbent material within the pressurized vessel and replace the black cap.
4. Place the pressurized vessel into the cardboard insert in the following manner:
  - Flatten the cardboard insert.
  - Place the pressurized vessel in the hole of the cardboard insert by inserting the black capped end first.
  - While the cardboard insert and vessel are still in your hands, separate the cardboard insert such that it creates an X around the pressurized vessel. (see photo on page 2 - LEFT)
5. Insert the cardboard shipper into the Styrofoam box, with the pressurized vessel at the bottom center of the insulated shipper. Place frozen cold packs into 2 of the 4 triangular compartments of the cardboard insert. Additional cold packs may be used if available to better control the temperature. (See photo on page 2 - RIGHT)



6. Insert the completed Green Clinical Microbiology/Virology Request form into the plastic Ziploc bag and place into the insulated shipper.
7. Place the Styrofoam lid on the Styrofoam shipper box..
8. Securely seal shipper, following the closing instructions found on the shipper.
9. Place the "UN3373 Biological Substance Category B" label on a side of the box not occupied by the directional labels.
10. Do not write anything on the box where the words "PROPER SHIPPING NAME" and "UN IDENTIFICATION NUMBER" appear. The UN3373 label takes care of this.
11. Complete Section 1 of the FedEx billable stamp with your name (preferably, or facility name), address, and phone number.
12. The left side of the FedEx billable stamp is for your records and the right side of the stamp should be placed on the top of the package.
13. Peel off the backing of the FedEx billable stamp and affix to the outside of the cardboard shipping box. This stamp should not cover any labeling and should not extend beyond any edge of the package.
14. **Call FedEx for a pick up at 1-800-463-3339 or contact your Health Department Epidemiology representative regarding package drop off for delivery to the lab. Do not ship on Friday or before a holiday.**
15. **Ship specimen without delay. Specimen must be received at DCLS within 72 hours of collection.**

**Result Reporting:** Routine influenza surveillance monitoring results are mailed to the submitter. Results are NOT telephoned to submitters.

**Specimen Rejection:** Specimens may be rejected for the following reasons:

- 1) Samples received in the laboratory more than 72 hours post collection (NOTE: Please do not ship on Friday or before a holiday)
- 2) Sample temperature requirements not maintained during shipment
- 3) Improperly or unlabelled samples
- 4) Insufficient volume
- 5) Sample collected in expired VTM
- 6) Samples collected in kits other than those supplied by DCLS
- 7) Excessive bacterial contamination.

**Additional Information:** Please forward information or questions about specimen collection or transport to the laboratory at (804) 648-4480 x271 or 272. Order additional collection kits by calling DCLS at (804) 648-4480 x104.